

REMARKS:

At the time of the Final Office Action, claims 1-6, 8, 15, 17 and 19 were pending and considered by the Examiner. All of the pending claims stand rejected. Pursuant to this Amendment, claims 1 and 15 have been amended. Claims 1-6, 8, 15, 17 and 19 remain pending.

It is noted that the Examiner listed claim 18 as pending. Claim 18 was previously cancelled. However, claim 19 is still pending. Correction is respectfully requested.

The claims stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Szonn (U.S. Patent No. 3,368,806), in view of Niese (U.S. Patent No. 5,303,526). This rejection is traversed for at least the following reasons.

The Examiner correctly points out the Szonn fails to provide the claimed indentation and the orientation of the indentation relative to the top portion of the ring-shaped portion in the uncompressed and fully compressed states. The Examiner attempts to solve this deficiency in Szonn by the teachings of Niese. However, it is respectfully argued that Niese does not solve the deficiency of Szonn. The Examiner points to Fig. 5 and element 24 in Niese as providing an indentation in a bumper. Even so, the pad 24 of Niese does not include an indentation in accordance with the present invention. Rather, pad 24 is configured to receive a rigid or non-compressible glide member 20a (see, e.g., Fig. 5 and col. 7, lines 38-44, and 59-63). As explained by Niese, and suggested by the Examiner, the pad is adapted to provide means for attachment of an additional element to the bumper body. The present invention, on the other hand, is not concerned with attaching an additional element to the bumper body as taught by Niese. For at least this reason, the proposed combination of Szonn and Niese does not render the claims obvious.

Nevertheless, in order to further the prosecution of the subject application and put this case into condition for allowance, claims 1 and 15 have been further amended to more clearly recite what it is the applicant regards as the invention. More specifically,

claims 1 and 15 have been further amended to positively recite a trapped sound area defined by the indentation when the bumper is subjected to a compressed state. It is noted that claim 8 as previously presented already recites trapped sound areas. The Examiner's attention is directed to Fig. 6 and paragraphs [0016], [0018], [0020] and [0021] of the subject application where the claimed trapped sound areas are shown and described. Even if one skilled in the art attempted to modify Szonn with the teachings of Niese, the claimed limitations of the trapped sound area(s) would not be present. Thus, for at least these additional reasons, claims 1, 8 and 15 are patentable over the cited references.

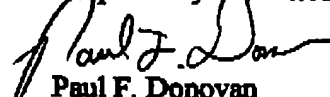
The remaining claims depend on one of claims 1 and 15, and, therefore, are allowable for at least the same reasons applied thereto, as well as for the additional subject matter recited in each.

Reconsideration and allowance of all the pending claims is respectfully requested.

Given the extensive prosecution in this case, in the event that there are any remaining issues that need to be addressed, in order to expedite the prosecution of the subject application, the undersigned respectfully requests that the Examiner telephone him at the number provided below.

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Respectfully submitted,


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